

Belbroughton and Fairfield Parish Council Annual Report and review for 2018/19.

This is a brief summary of the Council's activities and financial results in our the year to 31st March 2019

Overall a busy year, a mix of achievements but we also await other bodies to act.

Traffic: We achieved some progress on signage and have ongoing discussions with W.C.C. on various traffic calming measures. We acknowledged the large number of vehicles now using village roads. We continue our efforts, in partnership with other agencies, to improve the safety in our villages.

Councillor Alan Mabbett dutifully leads our efforts.

Green Spaces:

These spaces are important to our parishioners and are prioritised

Footpaths are well maintained and we thank the volunteer footpath warden Paul Hardcastle. WCC with Paul's pressure have paid for a number of improvements.

WCC have now taken over the responsibility for strimming some of the footpaths, much reducing our local workload.

It took 10 years to achieve a footpath diversion around Becketts Farm and the Council is thankful for the farmer and the other local landowner in assisting with this notwithstanding the legalities involved. The Severn Trent Resilience Project appeared to be well run by the contractors.

We continue to have Mr Nigel Williamson working for us as Lengthsman dealing with local tidying duties on the Highways and footways and also keeping our grit bins filled. James Callaghan and Bernard Edwards contract to us for gardening services in Belbroughton and Fairfield. We thank all three for their work.

The Green Belbroughton: Some trees on the boundary with the Talbot carpark have been felled to give more light, notably to encourage the ancient oak to grow. And, the P.C. will further consult with residents this year on future new planting to that green space. Part of the surplus in our accounts was due to £21,800 payment by the adjacent developer for use of The Green for a drainage route. These funds are available for improvements to the area. We expect the Developer to begin work on the new houses later in 2019. This includes work on the drainage link which will inevitably cause some disruption in accessing The Green. This though is only temporary and expected to be for a maximum of 6 weeks.

Neighbourhood Planning: Rather frustrating as we await the Bromsgrove District Council moving forward on its Green Belt review before pressing ahead with the consideration of a Neighbourhood Plan.

Play area at Belbroughton Rec. The project to improve the play area is supported by the parish council and is ongoing. Thanks to resident Mrs Sam Benbow for her diligent and ongoing efforts in striving for additional financial support for the project.

Schools The twice daily activities around our village schools continues to be challenging. We are working with the County Council to improve safety and to reduce disruption in the communities. The Parish Council however has only limited influence.

Little Bell Hall Pool: Operations have been carried out to partially clear the site to make it more appealing by removing overgrown vegetation. This has been welcomed by many people in the village.

The risk management of this area is being reviewed with the help of ROSPA. The long term future of the former pool is under review with the help of appropriate consultants

Smartwater: Fairfield residents have had the option to take up the security marking kits free of charge. Many thanks to those involved in the distribution especially resident Mr Conrad Palmer and Cllr. Alan Mabbett. More take up was required, and the new council will decide whether to roll out a scheme in Belbroughton.

Tidy Parish: Routine tidying carries on, plus Cllr. Allington had ~~recently~~ arranged a litter pick in Belbroughton Many thanks to her and Mr Conrad Palmer and the Fairfield Community Association for their regular litter picks in Fairfield.

Planning: Quarries remain in the Council's scope and it will assess future applications when they are presented.

Communication: The Council will review its social media involvement.

Three long serving councillors have retired. James Bradley, Trevor Jones and Chris Scurrell. All three of these councillors have given outstanding and faithful service to our community, over many years. Their efforts will be much missed but we wish them well in their retirement from public office

This leaves us with vacancies. Please consider joining us and helping your community prosper.

Details from Clerk Mr John Farrell.

Finance Report

The Council has reported a surplus:-

£5k from ordinary income (The Precept) plus, £31k from your Parish Council's assets, which includes £21k from the Developer of the site adjacent to the Village Green, Belbroughton.

Future possible capital expenditures: In 2019/20 Council will consider an extension to the Fairfield Rec Ground Carpark, investigate the cost / benefits of converting the current lighting stock to power saving L.E.D. bulbs, consider funding a 'Smartwater' scheme for Belbroughton ward and the Council may support the local libraries financially if the County Council significantly reduce their support.

'Ordinary' and 'Other' Income Year to 31.3.2019	
Precepted Income	£65,000
Other Income	
Lengthsman Scheme	£2,688 (County Council support.)
Rentals	£15,096 (Farm tenancies, F Villa F.C .& The Deli Belbroughton)
Cash Investments interest	£3,995 (8 investments are in place with F.S.C.S. covered banks)
Bel. Village Green Agreement	£21,800
Ward members grants	£2,740 (Thank you County Cllr. May)
Total -	<u>£111,319</u>
Major Expenditure incurred:	
Clerk salary (incl.N.I. & Pension)	£25,033
Grass Cutting & Green Spaces	£7,206
Belne Brook, Belbroughton site	£5,500
Footway Lighting	£5,349
Lengthsman duties	£4,520
Dog bins emptying	£3,145
Tree works - H. & Safety	£3.940

Maintenance Grants paid to community facilities:	
Belbroughton Parochial Church Council	£3,200 (Assists with the churchyard maintenance for both Belbroughton & Fairfield churches)
Belbroughton Recreation Centre	£1,155
Fairfield Village Hall	£730
Belbroughton Church Hall	£730

Grants Approved		
Capital Grants:		
Belbroughton Rec. Centre	£3,900	(Improvements to infrastructure)
Belbroughton Cricket Club	£550	(Secure storage)
Parish Projects:		
'Smartwater' kits for the Fairfield Ward.	£3,560	
Becketts Farm Footpath Diversion.	£1,739	
Belbroughton History Society repaint library phone box.	£240	(Funded by C.Cllr. K May.)
Minor Grants:		
Fairfield Community Association	£350	
Bingo club	£200	

Full details of these accounts including the balance sheet are on the website belbroughtonandfairfield-pc.info or are available in paper form upon request from the clerk.

Planning Report

28 planning applications were considered during the Council year.

Recommendations made to District Council:

- 13 No Objection
- 10 No Objection but with conditions
- 5 Objected to

The Committee meets once a month on the third Monday.

Agricultural Holdings Report

The Council owns 85 acres of arable farmland in Wildmoor & Stoneybridge.

Let under 13 tenancies at £90 /acre and is used for various arable cropping types.

The income is used to fund the Capital & Minor Grants and Parish Projects.

Council inspects the holdings during the year to ensure they are well maintained which has again proved to be the case.

As well as providing a regular income the land is a significant area of 'Green Belt' in the Council's ownership and control.

Council Meetings

Your council meets on the first Monday of the month (except allowing for bank holidays) with Planning and Finance Committee meetings on each third Monday. Meetings are held in the Jubilee Room, Belbroughton Recreation Centre and the Fairfield First School on a 2:1 month rotational basis Residents are welcome to attend all meetings and to raise issues with their councillors or comment on items on the agenda during the 15 minutes of 'public Time'. The agendas are posted on the notice boards in Belbroughton, Fairfield and Bell Heath.

Agendas and minutes of meetings can also be found on the Parish Council website

belbroughtonandfairfield-pc.info

Parish Council Chairman

Councillor. Dr. Robert Morgan 1st July 2019.